

*Hermes Trismegistus*

HIS

Second Book,

CALLED

*Asclepius.*

---

Containing fifteen Chapters,

With

A Commentary.

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LONDON,

Printed for *Thomas Brewster*, at  
the three Bibles in *St. Pauls*  
Church-yard, near the  
West End.

MDCLVII.

NEW YORK

1812

Second Book

DEAD

Alphabetic



COMMUNICATE

LONDON

Printed by J. G. Smith, at the  
British Museum, near the  
West End.

1812

THE  
Second Book

OF  
*Hermes Trismegistus.*

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CHAP. I.

**T**Hou, Asclepius, serves  
in stead of a Sun un-  
to me; for God hath  
brought thee to us,  
that thou mightest be present  
with us in thy divine Dis-  
course; being such which may seem  
worthy to carry a greater lustre  
of Piety and Religion, than all  
the works before done of us, or  
any gifts inspired by divine In-  
spiration; which if understand-  
ingly thou shalt regard, thou  
shalt be richly filled with all

A 2

good

2 The second Book of

good things thorowout thy whole Soul: If notwithstanding there be many good things, and not one generall, in which all things are, for the one is perceived to consent and agree with the other; all these things belong to that One, and that One is All; for the one so coheres to the other, that they cannot be separated. But in the future Discourse, by a diligent hearkening, thou shalt fully know it. But thou, O **Asclepius**, proceed a little, and call forth him which should be present; who entering, **Asclepius** also suggesteth **Amnon** to be present. **Trismegistus** saith, No Envie hindereth **Amnon** from us; for to his name we remember many things to be written of us, as also to his loving and dear Son, many things of naturall Philosophy, and of many  
Our-



*Hermes Trismegistus.* 3

Our landish and strange things: but this Tractate I will ascribe to your name, neither call any other save **Ammon**, lest a most devout Discourse of so weighty a matter should be violated by the intervention and presence of many comers; for it is an argument of no honest and religious heart, to publish a Tractate replenisht with the fulnesse of the divine Majesty, to the view of every mans conscience. Holy **Ammon** being now entered into a private cloiet, fitted with the Religion of four men, and the Divine Presence of God, in much reverence and reverence he begins thus to declare himself in the name of all the **Hermes** to the consciences and souls of them who are prepared to hear.

**Trism.** O **Asclepius** the soul of every man is immortall, but

4 The second Book of  
not all alike; for there is a difference both in the time and manner.

**Asclep.** No indeed, O **Tellmegeistus**, for every Soul is of one quality.

**Trism.** O **Asclepius**, how quickly hast thou learned, by the very light of reason; for said I not this, That all things are one, and one all things? that all things were in the Creatour, before he created all things; neither unworthily is he said to be All, whose parts are all things: therefore in this whole Discourse have a care to remember him, who being One, is All, even the very Creatour of all things; all things descend from Heaven into the Earth, into the Water, and into the Air. The Fire onely, in that it is carried upward, is lively subservient to that which descends; for what-

*Hermes Trismegistus.* 5

whatsoever descends from above is generating, and whatsoever ascends upward is nourishing; the earth alone abiding in it self, is the receiver of all things, and the restorer of all things she receiveth. In this therefore wholly (as you said) even all things, both the Soul and the World, are naturally moved and concluded. So the various equality of every shape being differenced, that the **Species** of the qualities, by distance, may be known to be infinite, yet so united to this, that the whole may seem one, and from that one, all to have their being; wherefore the whole World are the four Elements of which it is compounded; Fire, Water, Earth, Air; one World, one Soul, one God. Now be thou present with me, as much as thou art able, both in minde, and wisdom: for the reason of

6 The second Book of  
the Divinity which is to be  
known by the divine intention  
of the understanding, is most  
like unto a Torrent running  
with a violent and swift stream  
from a high Rock, whereby it  
glides away from the under-  
standing of such, who are either  
Hearers or Dealers in it.

The  
COMMENTARY.

*This first Chapter teacheth,  
that all things belong to one, and  
that all things are one, of one, as  
from which all things are, One;  
as all the effects which in their  
cause are one, as that every mans  
Soul is immortall: but yet after  
a different sort. All things de-  
scend from Heaven; that which  
descendeth affords generation, that  
which ascendeth and goeth up-  
ward, giveth onely life. This  
thing*

Hermes Trismegistus. 7

thing to be one, of which all things  
are: and this which is all things  
to move the world, and all the  
forms of which the world is com-  
pounded, to wit, the Fire, the Air,  
the Water, and the Earth. And  
as all bodies make one body of one  
world so it will have all the forms  
of things to make one uniform  
form of one world, which it cal-  
leth the Form of the world; and  
these are one Body, one Soul, one  
World, one God; from whom Di-  
vine Understanding and the Word  
passeth from above, with a swift  
lightening downwards, like unto  
a swift Torrent, which flows in-  
to, and fills all things, and this  
Divine Wisdom and the Word,  
what is it (I pray) but the Divi-  
nity, or Divine Wisdom it self,  
which is the Creator of all  
things, which as the wise man  
sings, is the only Mover of all  
things, and which being one can

8 The second Book of  
*do all things, and which abiding  
in it self changeth all things.  
This is the first part.*

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CHAP. II.

**H**Heaven therefore is the  
visible preserver of all  
those bodies whose encrease and  
decrease the Sun and Moon have  
as it were power of. But God  
who is the Creator of all things  
is the Governour of Heaven, and  
of its Soul, and of all things in  
the world. For from all the  
foresaid things, of all which  
there is a Governour, there  
is a frequent influence carried  
through the world by nature it  
self, and by the soul of every  
Genus and Species in it: for the  
world is prepared of God to be

*Hermes Trismegistus.* 9

a receptacle of every sort of Species or form; and fashioning out nature by the forms; hath brought the world by the four Elements even to Heaven. All the works of God which are pleasing to the eye, and which hang over us are divided into Species, and in that manner I am now about to relate. The **Genera**, or kinds, of all things follow their **Species** for that the **Genus** is the totality, or substance of it, & the **Species** a part of the **Genus**: wherefore there is a **Genus** of good Spirits, and a **Genus** of bad, as also of men; and likewise of Birds, and of all things which the world hath, it begets **Species** like to it self: there is another **Genus** of brute Beasts wanting indeed understanding and reason, but yet not a soul or life, whereby it takes delight in Benefits, & pines and mourns

## 10 The second Book of

mournes away at injuries. I  
say of all things which live on  
the Earth by the preservation of  
Roots, and Plants, whose **Spe-**  
**cies** are dispersed throughout  
the whole Earth, the very Hea-  
ven it self is full of the Majesty  
of God, whose **Genus** inhabi-  
teth that place where all **Speci-**  
**es** are immortall; for the **Spe-**  
**cies** is a part of the **Genus**, as the  
Soul a part of man being a point  
of necessity to follow the qua-  
lity of it **Genus** from whence it  
proceeds, that albeit every **Ge-**  
**nus** or kind be immortall,  
yet every **Species** is not  
immortall; but the **Ge-**  
**nus** of the godhead and the  
**Species** are immortall, yet the  
kinds of other things whose  
eternity remaines in the **Genus**,  
albeit it dyes in the **Species**, is  
yet preserved by the fruitful-  
nesse of growing: therefore the  
**Species**



*Hermes Trismegistus. II*

**Species** are mortall as man is mortall, his soul immortal; yet with every **Genus** the **Species** of every **Genus** is mixed, some which before were made, some made of these; but all these which were made are either of God, of Angels, or of men; being all formes most like unto their kindes: for it is impossible for Bodies to be formed without the will of God; **Species** to be fashioned without the help of Spirits, or brute Beasts to be ordered or disciplined without men. Whatsoever therefore ill Spirits swarving from their kind are joyned into the form of any **Species** of a divine **Genus**, are by that Proximity and nearnesse accounted like unto Gods, but the **Species** of which Spirits persevering in the quality of their kind, and these loving the wisdom of man are called Spirits;

12 The second Book of  
rits : there is also the like **Species**  
of men, but more large; for  
the **Species** of mankind is of  
many Shapes, and full of vari-  
ety, and coming from above from  
the aforesaid fellowship makes  
a conjunction of necessity almost  
with all other **Species**, in which  
respect it comes nearest to God;  
who with Divine worship hath  
joynd himself unto God, even  
in that holinesse he requires;  
and they come nearest to ill  
Spirits, who joyne themselves  
to them: and those men who are  
contented with a mediocrity in  
their **Venus**, shall be like those  
**Species** they resemble and  
joyne themselves to.

The  
COMMENTARY.

The Second Chapter for the bet-  
ter understanding of what is and  
shall

Hermes Trismegistus. 13

shall be said, intimateth that Mercurius doth use the word Animal in a far other signification then we have accustomed, as also the word Anima. For out of the Second Dialogue of Pimander he defineth the Soul by motion; wherefore whatsoever hath a moving faculty by the observance of his speech, hath Animam a Soul, whatsoever hath Soul and Body is Animal. The Heaven therefore is an Animal, so likewise the world, Plants, and the Elements. But it is our custome only to call that an Animal, which is a living Creature, and hath sense; Anima we define not only by motion but by Life, Sense, Voluntary motion, and Understanding. Therefore when we hear of the word Animal let us take it in his sense, and not in our own. But now to the Dialogue; he compareth Heaven and Heavenly bodies to other sensible things  
as

14 The second Book of

as a man to other Creatures ; but  
yet man with other Creatures as  
a reasonable Soul , and Hea-  
ven with other sensible things as  
a sensible preserver. But that  
God is the Ruler & Governor of all  
things which are in the world , is  
nothing else , but that God provideth  
for all things , dispenseth all things  
in their kinds and Species , of all  
which the World is the receptacle ,  
and God imparteth to every one as  
to a fit instrument some gift or  
propriety ; as the Sun and Moon  
are the Divine Organs for the  
Springing and growing of things ,  
and for their encrease , and de-  
crease , and disposeth of men by  
Angels , and of brutes by men.  
But what he speaks of spirits , that  
Species cannot be formed without  
their help , and that certain have  
cleaved to a divine Genus , and  
in nearness and conversation have  
been accounted like unto Gods , and  
certain

Hermes Trismegistus. 15

certain in the quality of their Gen-  
tus to have persevered Lovers of  
the wisdom of men. We know,  
out of the sacred Scriptures, that  
those Angels which kept not their  
first State, but left their habita-  
tion, were reserved in everlasting  
chains, under darkness unto the  
judgment of the great day: for al-  
beit they counterfeited themselves to  
be Lovers of men, yet they love  
them not, but draw them to the  
same damnation which they them-  
selves have had from the Begin-  
ning. They counterfeited even to  
love, when they brought death up-  
on all men, saying, Ye shall not  
die, but shall be as Gods knowing  
good and evil: what therefore he  
here speaketh of Angels or Spirits,  
cannot seeme fitly to be applyed to  
any divine knowledge, but to imi-  
tate the error of the Gentiles; but  
what he speaks of men are those  
which cleave unto God and grow  
religious,

16 The second Book of

religious; but those which joyne themselves unto evil Spirits we confesse to be those which shall be received into the Company of Devils, and shall be joyned unto the evil Angels which shall be reserved, (as hath been said) in eternal chaines under darknesse unto the great day; for we know it pronounced out of Gods mouth what he will say to them on the left hand in the day of Judgment, Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devill, and his angels; and who are those, but those who are joyned unto them, and love the works of darknesse in this life? Thus much for the Second Chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

**I**N this regard, O Asclepius,  
Man is a great miracle, a Crea-  
ture both to be revered and  
honored being after the nature &  
Image of God, as though he were  
God. This the Angels know,  
for as much as they were created  
after the same nature, but dis-  
dained part of the humane Na-  
ture, & relied only on the Divine  
Nature. O therefore, the more  
temperate the Nature of man is,  
and comes nearest to God and to  
the divinity, the more he despis-  
eth that part of his, whereby he  
becomes earthly; all other  
things below, with whom he  
must

## 18 The second Book of

must needs be, he knoweth with a Heavenly disposition, and are near unto him in way of Charity, yet his desires are in heaven: so therefore he is happily placed in the midst, that what things are here below him he loveth, and is himself beloved of those things above. He inhabiteth the earth, and by his agility is mixed with the Elements, yet by the sharpnesse of his understanding he divideth into the depths of the ~~Sea~~; all things appear manifest to him neither do the Heavens seem to be above his reach, but as it were near by the quicknesse of his Spirit; no obscurity or darknesse of Air, can disturbe his fantasie, no thicknesse of ground can hinder his endeavour, nor depth of water hinder his eyesight; all things are the same with him, even all creatures whether  
whether



whether they take root from above or below. Things without life, grow upwards from one root into woods and bushes; some are nourished with two Elements, some with one; the food is for two parts, the Life and the Body, of which the **Animal** consisteth. The soul of the World is alwaies nourished by a continuall and restles agitation. Corporeall things encrease and are nourished by such things which the water and earth affordeth. The Spirit, of which all things are full, is mixt with all things, quickens and inlivens all things, adding sense unto the understanding of man, which fifth part by Divine Inspiration is only granted to man; and which not to be seen in any other Creatures doth beautifie advance and lift up the understanding of man to the knowledge

20 The second Book of  
knowledge of divine mysteries;  
but for that I am put in minde  
to speak of the understanding,  
I will hereafter expound the  
reason of it unto you; for it is  
most holy, excellent, and no lesse  
than that which belongs to the  
Divinity it self: but now I will  
dispatch what I began; for I said  
in the beginning, that in the  
nearnesse and conjunction of  
the Deity onely, men enjoy the  
favour of God: for whosoever  
have attained to so much feli-  
city, that they perceive that Di-  
vine Sense or Understanding,  
they are nearest unto the Divi-  
nity and Wisdom of God,  
which men onely partake of.

**Asclep.** O **Trismegistus**,  
there is not, a like understand-  
ing of all men.

**Trism.** O **Asclepius**, All  
men have not attained that true  
Understanding, but apprehend-  
ing

ing some false fantasie, and that without any true reason, out of a rash opinion, are meerly deceived, which begets wickedness in the minde, and transforms the best man into the nature and likeness of a beast. But of the Understanding and the like, when I come to speak of the Spirit, I will give you the full reason; for man is only of two parts: the one part simple, which the Græcians call *εικόν*, or which we call the Image of God; but the other fourfold, which the Græcians call *κορμικόν*, and we the earthly substance, or pourtraiture, being the body, in which is inclosed that which we have affirmed to be the divine part of man, which is his Soul. In which the pure Divinity of the Soul, with the sense and feeling of a clear conscience, resteth at peace within it self, as within a Castle of Defence. *The*

## 22 The second Book of

### The COMMENTARY.

This third Chapter extolleth  
the dignity of man, in which the  
Author of so great benefits is  
chiefly to be acknowledged, and  
for ever to be praised and lauded,  
who hath honoured man with  
such excellent gifts; for, as he  
meaneth, man is made, that he  
might be like unto Angels, ac-  
knowledging them both to be, and  
that they are born with him,  
whom he hath to be his Guardians  
and Preservers, even from the  
first beginning of his nativity, con-  
sisting of a nature near unto Im-  
mortality, marked with the cha-  
racter or image of God, com-  
pounded of a mortall and immor-  
tall, earthly and supernaturall  
part: but who soareth after di-  
vine things, despiseth and under-  
values

values these earthly, hath his assistance in immortall and heavenly things, looks up and sighs after Heaven, knowing that to be the place of the better part of him, & of sweetest affinity to his Soul: nevertheless, he is placed here in the midst of the world, tying other things here below unto him, with whom (by Divine Ordinance) he knows he must needs be in the bond of love and charity, loving so these earthly things, that he may be loved of heavenly. He inhabiteth the earth by his agility, is mixed with the elements, & by the sharpnesse of his understanding descends into the deeps. All things are manifest to him, the Heavens seem not to be above his reach: for that by the quicknesse of his Spirit he perceives them to be (as it were) neer unto him. The darknesse of the air can neither confound the intention of his minde,

B not

## 24 The second Book of

nor yet the thicknesse of the earth  
brinder his endeavour, or the depth  
of the waters obscure his eye-sight,  
and above all creatures, God hath  
beautified, advanced, and lifted up  
the understanding of man, to par-  
take of Divine Knowledge; the un-  
derstanding being onely the cele-  
stially and immortall part, and  
challengeth a Divine Essence, and  
some men have attained to this Di-  
vine Knowledge, and therein are  
happy, bearing alwayes a zealous  
and religious minde towards God.  
Others content themselves onely  
with a shadow of Divine Know-  
ledge, which who so followeth, er-  
reth and is deceived; for this  
mist of a shadow of godlinesse, be-  
getteth wickednesse in their mindes  
which are so deceived, and trans-  
forms a man (though by nature  
a creature good and divine) into  
the likenesse and condition of a  
beast.

CHAP.

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CHAP. IV.

**A**sclep. Why then, O Trismegistus, must man have his abode in the world, and not most happily live in that part where God is?

**Trism.** Thou rightly enquirest, **Asclepius**: For we also beseech God, that he will enable us to give the reason; for seeing all things depend on his will, then even those also which are most mysterious, the reason of which we endeavour to unfold, by our present discourse: Hear therefore, O **Asclepius**: The Lord who is the Creatour of all things, whom we truly call God, made the world first, which might be perceived and seen; but yet I affirm it to have

## 26 The second Book of

no sense. For of this, whether it hath or no, I will declare another time ; but so that it may be seen of all. Because therefore he made this first, and that the work seemed fair and good unto him, as most full of the variety of good things, he loved it as a part of his Divinity and Power, and therefore, because it was of such excellencie and goodnesse, he would have Man made, that he might behold the works he had thus made, and likewise imitate his Wiildom and Providence ; for the will of God is the chiefest perfection, in that he fulfilled both his will and his deed, in one and the same moment of time. When therefore God perceived that that image of his (the Soul) could not be studious of all things, unlesse he should cloath it with an earthly covering, he builded for



*Hermes Trismegistus. 27*

in this house of clay, confounding and mixing both parts into one, as much as each body should be capable: Wherefore he made Man of an immortall Soul, and mortall Body, that being a Creature thus composed, he might satisfie both ends, which was, to be in admiration of Heaven and to pray for spirituall and heavenly things, and to inhabit, and govern these earthly things below: and I do not onely avouch the Earth and the Water to be mortall things, which two (out of the four Elements) Nature hath subjected to the use of man; but all other things whatsoever belonging to man, as tillage, pastorage, buildings, ports, shipping, navigation, traffique, & merchandise, which is the strongest bond of humane Society: And there is a part of the world which is Water and

28 The second Book of  
Earth that which is the Earthly  
part of the world is preserved  
for the knowledge and use of  
Arts, and discipline without  
which God would not have the  
world to be perfect, for necessity  
followeth the pleasure of God;  
and the effects follow his will,  
for it is not credible that God  
should be displeased with his  
own will for he knew long be-  
fore what would be, and  
what would please him.

The  
COMMENTARY.

*This fourth Chapter, why God did  
not place man in the spirituall regi-  
on but in this world; and the an-  
swer is plaine, and also why he  
formed man of both natures a  
mortall and immortall; and why  
the soul which he created after his  
own Image and likenesse, he put in*

a corporeall and earthy closure ;  
 and that the will of God is the chief  
 perfection of things, which necessi-  
 ty follows, and effect the necessity ;  
 for God fulfilled both his will, and  
 his deed in one and the same mo-  
 ment of time. That he calleth the  
 world, the second Deity, is as much  
 as if you should call a second duerie  
 and unity ; for two is one and one  
 two, but one is absolutely one, but  
 two not absolutely one but by par-  
 ticipation and conuersion one, and  
 the diuine one. So there is one ab-  
 solutely God, but the world is not  
 God, but God by participation,  
 being the very stamp of all sensible  
 and delectable things. Thus, for  
 the fourth part of Aiclepius.

## CHAP. V.

**B**ut, O *Asclepius*, I observe that thou dost earnestly desire to heare, how a man may come to enjoy that muscally harmony and divine Worship, which belongs to heaven. Wherefore hear, O *Asclepius*, there is one frequent assemblie amongst men for this service of God; and this no other Creature can perform but man alone. For God is only pleased and delighted that man should extoll his admired work, sing praises of thanksgiving unto him, and perform such worship and service as belongs to his holy name. Neither do those heavenly graces unworthily descend into the congregations

*Hermes Trismegistus.* 31

tions of men, lest that this earthly World should seeme unbeautified in respect of the want of this heavenly and sweet Musick; but rather that his name who is the Father of all things, might be celebrated with the well tuned voices, and comely praises of men. So that neither in heaven nor earth this sweet Harmony of thanksgiving might cease; for there are some men (though few in number) that are indued with so divine and holy a spirit, that their care is only to please, reverence, and serve the Lord: but whoso ever through the confusion of both natures, the flesh prevailing, have darkned their spirituall understanding, they are so much given over to their own lusts, and are only intent upon these outward and lower things. Therefore a man is not to be

## 32 The second Book of

esteemed the weaker in respect  
that he is in part mortall, but  
peradventure thereby he may  
seem the more firly and effectua-  
lley composed to encrease in  
full knowledge and understand-  
ing, to wit, because unlesse he  
had been made of both natures  
he could not have sustained  
both, therefore was he framed  
of both that he might have both  
an earthly and divine choice.  
I desire thee O **Asclepius**, not  
only to harken unto the reason  
of this tractate; but also to en-  
tertain it with much Zeal & fer-  
vency of Spirit. For the reason  
to many is incredible, but to  
devouter mindes it seemes true  
and good; wherefore from  
hence I will begin.

The

The  
COMMENTARY.

This fifth Chapter sets forth  
that sweet Musick granted to men,  
after forth the praises of God which  
when the prophet did well con-  
ceive, who being full of the spirit of  
God, commanded to sing psalmes  
unto the Lord with a loud voice,  
and in the assemblies to praise the  
Lord, upon the Cymbals, upon  
the Lute, Harp and Organs, for  
this is the chief end both of singing  
and Musicks. The Letter is in  
itself conspicuous.

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## CHAP. VI.

**T**he Lord of eternity is first  
God, secondly the World,  
and thirdly Man. The maker  
of

# 34 The second Book of

of the World is God, and all things therein governing all things with man whom he hath appointed **Uicegerent** or governor, whom he hath made properly to take the Charge of his whole work, that both he and the world might be an Ornament of praise unto himself, that by this divine composition of man, the world in Greek might be the more truly called *κόσμος*, that is, an Order or Ornament. For he knew himself, and knew the world to wit that remembering what resemblance it had with his parts, what was for his use, and what for his service, He might labour to give praise and great thanks unto God and to honour his Image; being not Ignorant, that he was made also after the Image of God, of which there are two Images, to  
wit



wit the world and man; whereby  
it cometh to passe, that for as  
much as there is but one joyning  
together on that part, he con-  
sists of soul and sense, and Spi-  
rit and understanding he is di-  
vine, and thereby may seeme  
to ascend up into heaven; but  
on his earthly part which con-  
sists of fire, water, and air, he  
remaines a mortall Creature  
upon earth, is altogether fixed  
on the things below and swal-  
lowed up of Nature; for so man  
is partly diuine and partly mor-  
tall abiding in one body, but he  
hath a measure of each.

Religion before all men  
(which a virtuous life follows)  
seemes only then to be perfitt,  
when there is a contempt of all  
lustfull desires and unlawfull  
concupiscence, assisted with all  
manner of vertues. For all such  
things are contrary to the Soul  
and

36 The second Book of  
and Spirituall understanding,  
which are possessed with a corpor-  
al, and earthly desire which are  
well called by the name of goods  
or possessions, in that they are  
not born with us but afterwards  
are possessed of us, wherefore  
all things of this kind are differ-  
ing from man that we may even  
despise the body, and those  
things which we greedily covet,  
or any vice or wickednesse  
which we lustfully desire, for  
so far as he is led by reason; so  
far he is a man; that contem-  
plating of the divinity, he may  
contemn and despise that part of  
his, which is mortall, but only  
so far as necessity compells for  
preservation of the soul. For,  
that man may be most perfect in  
either part, observe him in each  
to be formed of four Ele-  
ments, or principall parts with  
two hands and two feet, and  
other members of his body, with  
which

*Hermes Trismegistus.* 37

which he may do service to this lower or earthly world, but with his other four parts, to wit, his understanding, soul, memory, and providence, he searcheth and looketh into all divine causes and things, from whence it happens that man with a Restles search enquires into the diversities, qualities, and effects of things. But being hindered by the weight, and too much imperfection of his body, he cannot properly foresee the true naturall causes of things. This man therefore, so framed and fashioned, and that for such a ministry & service commanded of the great God, as in decently governing the world, piously worshiping his God, & worthily & fitly obedient to both the wills of God, what gift dost thou think he shall be recompensed with? for seeing that this world is the work of God, and man  
by

# 38 The second Book of

by his labour and industry pre-  
serveth and encreaseth the beau-  
ty of it, joyneth his labour with  
the will of God, when by the  
help of his body, and by daily  
paines and care he adorneth  
that **Species** and forme, which  
by divine wisdom he first crea-  
ted, but with that with which our  
parents were rewarded? with  
which also that we may be  
rewarded: if it may seem  
good to his wisdom, we do  
most earnestly pray and desire,  
that he will release and free us  
out of this worldly prison, deli-  
ver us from these earthl y bonds;  
and restore us like unto the  
divine nature, pure and holy.

**Asclep** Thou saiest the very truth,  
**O Arismegistus**, for this is their  
reward who live piously towards  
God, and faithfully to the  
World; but to them that live  
otherwise and wickedly, both

a passage is denied them into heaven, and a fearfull change into other shapes, unbeseeming a righteous soul. But to proceed, O *Trismegistus*, sundry soules under the hope of future eternity are much indangered in this world, which seemes to some Incredible, to some Fabulous and to others Ridiculous; for the fruit which is reaped by worldly possessions in this temporall life, seemeth to be a very sweet thing; wherefore it obliquely holdeth the soul, that it cleaveth too much on that part of it which is mortall, neither suffers it to take notice of the divine part, envy hating immortallity: for I will, as it were by foreknowledge tell you, that none after us shall have simple election, which is true Philosophy; being a frequent beholding a holy worship and knowledge

40 The second Book of

knowledge of the divinity, for many do confound it after a divers manner; how therefore do many men corrupt this incomprehensible Philosophy, or diversly confound it.

**Trism.** O **Asclepius** in this manner mixing it by little devices into divers disciplines not comprehensible, Arithmetick Musick Geometrie, but pure Philosophy, and that only hanging upon divine religion, ought to apply it self wholly to the rest, that it may admire the course of the Starrs and Planets, their appointed stations, and their Commutations and changes to consist of numbers: but the dimensions, qualities, and quantities of the earth, the depth of the Sea, the Vertue of fire, and the effects of all these, acknowledging nature that it may admire, adore, and praise  
art

art and an excellent understanding. But to know Musick is nothing else then to know the Order of all things, which pertakes of divine wildome; for an order of all things artificially pitched upon one generall, will make in divine Melodie a certain sweet sounding and most true Harmony.

**Aclep.** What then shall become of men after us.

**Isis.** They shall be deceived by the Subelty of Sophisters, and turned away from pure and divine Philosophy; for out of a pure mind and soul, to worship God, to honour him in his works, and to give thanks unto him for his will, which is only full of goodnesse, this is Philosophie violated or corrupted by no foolish or unreasonable curiosity of the minde; and of these, thus far.

The

40 The second Book of  
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many do confound it after a di-  
vers manner; how therefore do  
many men corrupt this in-  
comprehensible Philosophy, or  
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the rest, that it may admire the  
course of the Starrs and Planets,  
their appointed stations, and  
their Commutations and  
changes to consist of numbers:  
but the dimensions, qualities,  
and quantities of the earth, the  
depth of the Sea, the Vertue of  
fire, and the effects of all these,  
acknowledging nature that it  
may admire, adore, and praise  
art



art and an excellent understanding. But to know Musick is nothing else then to know the Order of all things, which pertakes of divine wildome; for an order of all things artificially pitched upon one generall, will make in divine Melodie a certain sweet sounding and most true Harmony.

**Aclep.** What then shall become of men after us.

**Ans.** They shall be deceived by the Subtly of Sophisters, and turned away from pure and divine Philosophy; for out of a pure mind and soul, to worship God, to honour him in his works, and to give thanks unto him for his will, which is only full of goodnesse, this is Philosophie violated or corrupted by no foolish or unreasonable curiosity of the minde; and of these, thus far.

The

## 42 The second Book of

The  
COMMENTARY.

*This sixth Chapter discourseth that God is the first God absolutely; the World the second, not absolutely but by participation God, as which is the first Image of an absolutely deity; man, the third God by participation of the divinity, and the second Image of God: but God is not an Image, but the truth of all Images, that man may ascend up into heaven by his soul, by his understanding, by his spirit, by his reason, as it were by the Superior Elements. But wherein he is made of fire, of air, of water, and earth, he is subject to death, and to dote upon all worldly things, deprived of that divine part; That the measure after which a man ought to live, is religion which goodnesse follows, and which seems*

Hermes Trismegistus. 43

to be perfit, when being armed with Vertue it despiseth the coveting of other mens goods or any thing hurtfull to it, as possessions, the body it self, and all those things we lust after, even the very sense of appetite. For so far he ought to be called a man, whiles that this opinion is led only by reason, and that in contemplation of the divinity he contemneth and despiseth that part of him which is mortall; more then may serve for the preservation of his life.

Asclepius divineth that of the succeeding Egyptians, that there shall be none after them to attain to the pure Philosophy of the knowledge of God. Now Hermes asketh, to what end man ought to learn the dimensions of the earth, that is Geometry, the qualities, quantities, the depth of the Sea, and the nature of fire, and the effects of all these, that is the Universall Philosophy,

## 44 The second Book of

losophy of numbers, celestial  
 globes, and naturall things, cer-  
 tainly to admire, adore, and  
 praise, the Art, excellent Invention  
 and Workman of all these for this is  
 pure Philosophy and only depending  
 upon divine religion; this is Musick,  
 this is harmony, to know the or-  
 der of all things, which all divini-  
 ty partaketh of, and which artifi-  
 cially pitched upon one generall,  
 will make in divine melody, a cer-  
 tain well tun'd and most sweet har-  
 mony and that is Philosophy, which  
 is corrupted by no unfit curiosity of  
 the minde, which with a pure soul  
 and mind doth worship the diety,  
 and honour his works, as also to  
 give thanks for the will of God,  
 which is so full of goodnesse, and  
 confirmeth the Prophecy of Aicle-  
 pius. This is the sixth partiti-  
 on.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

**O**F a Spirit, and such like, I will now begin. There was ~~God~~, and ~~Wyle~~, which in Greek signifieth the world, and the Spirit was in the world; but not as with God, neither are those things God, of which the world is, wherefore they were not, when they were not created; but even then they were in that, from whence they had their being. For those things are not onely said to be, which are not yet created, but those also which have not a fruitfulness in generating; so that nothing can be produced and generated of them. Whatsoever things therefore have in them a nature of conceiving, those are things

46 The second Book of  
things apt to ingender, which  
may be created of these, albeit  
they ingender, or are created  
themselves; wherefore God  
verlasting, God eternall neither  
is, or could be begotten, he  
is, hath been, and ever shall be.  
This is that therefore which  
it self is the whole nature  
of God.

But the nature of the world  
and of the Spirit, albeit they  
seem to be created from the be-  
ginning; yet they have in them-  
selves a vertue of begetting and  
procreation, as also fruitfulness;  
for a beginning is in the quality  
of the nature, which contains  
in it self a quality, and na-  
ture of conception and birth.  
This is therefore onely gene-  
rable, or easie to be inge-  
ndered without the concep-  
tion of another; but that which  
hath in it onely the vertue of  
concei-

receiving, is by the mixture of  
another nature. So they are to  
be discerned, that this place of  
the world may not seem to be  
filled with those things which  
are in themselves, as which hath  
in itself the power of whole Na-  
ture. I call it a place in which  
are all things; for neither could  
all these things be, if a place  
were wanting which might con-  
tain all things; for a place was  
to be provided for all things that  
were; for neither the quanti-  
ties, nor qualities, nor situati-  
ons, or effects, can be known of  
things which are not: therefore  
the world, albeit it be not so  
created, yet it contains in it self  
the nature of all things, as which  
giveth (in all things) rich and  
fruitfull matter to conceive.  
This is therefore that whole qua-  
lity & matter which maybe crea-  
ted,

48 The second Book of  
red, albeit it be not created:  
For as Nature is a fruitfull  
matter of quality, so the same  
is as fruitfull in malignity. Nei-  
ther have I said, O **Asclepius**  
and **Amnon**, which is said of  
many, whether God could wea-  
ken and turn away evil from the  
nature of things? To which we  
answer not at all; yet for your  
sakes I will prosecute what I be-  
gan, and give a reason: For they  
affirm, that God ought all man-  
ner of wayes to have freed the  
world from wickednesse; for he  
is so in the world, as though he  
seems to be a member, or part  
of it; for it is so provided and  
ordained by the most high God,  
as much as with reason he could  
then, when he hath vouchsafed  
to dignifie the mindes of men  
with sense, discipline, & under-  
standing, for with those things in  
which we excel other creatures,  
we can only shun the deceit of



sin, guile, and all other corruption. For he, before that he is ensnared in them, shall by the very sight & ugliness of them, avoid them, that man is guarded with divine knowledge and wisdom; for it is the foundation of discipline, consisting in the excellencie of knowledge: for by the Spirit all things are ministered, and refreshed in the world, and (as it were) an organ, or instrument, is subject to the will of the great God. Wherefore hitherto in our souls, let us conceive of that wise Moderatour and sensible Governour of God, which is called the Spirit, or holy Ghost, which comprehends in it self every place, and the substance of every thing, and the full matter of things begotten and created; and whatsoever else in the world, either for substance, quality, or quantity: for

50 The second Book of  
all the **Species** in the world,  
and every thing according to  
that nature which is given it of  
God, is moved and governed by  
the Spirit. But the world is the  
receptacle of all things, and the  
haunt and place to move in for  
all creatures, of which God is  
the Governour, dispensing in all  
worldly things, as much as is  
necessary to every one, who  
with his Spirit fills all things, of  
what nature and quality soever.  
For the world is round. like un-  
to a Ball or sphere, being for the  
form or qualities sake invisible  
to it self. For if you shall chuse  
any high place in it only to look  
down, thou canst not see from  
thence what is below, and be-  
cause it consists of many places  
and parts, it is supposed to have  
a quality: and by the alone forms  
of the **Species**, in whose **Effi-**  
**gies** it seems to be ingraven, it  
is

*Hermes Trismegistus.* 51

is supposed to be visible, when it is shewed, drawn out, or painted, but indeed it is alwayes to it self invisible. Whereby, the bottom or lowest part of the Sphere (if there be any) is called in Greek *δόνος*, for *ἰδών* in the Greek tongue signifieth to see, which sight the bottom of the Sphere may want, whereupon the **Species** are called *ἰδναί*, for that they are of an invinble form; and for that they are deprived of light, the Grecians call *δόνος*, and for that they are in the bottom of the Sphere, the Latines, **Inferi**. These are therefore the ancient principles, or are (as it were) beginnings and heads of all things contained in any part or parts of these.

**Asclep.** All these things therefore, as you speak of, which are earthly, O **Trismegistus**,

## 52 The second Book of

are present as well in every  
**Species**, as in the full substance  
of every thing.

**Trism.** Therefore the world  
nourisheth the bodies, the Spi-  
rit the life or soul and sense, or  
reason; the understanding being  
a gift with which man is only en-  
riched, neither all men but few  
who have a heart & judgment to  
be capable of so great a benefit:  
for as the world is inlightened by  
the Sun, so mans minde is il-  
luminated by this light & much  
more. For whatsoever the Sun  
doth enlighten, by the Eclipses  
and interposition of Earth and  
the Moon, and by the approach  
of night, it loseth, and is depri-  
ved of that light: but reason  
when it shall be once mixed  
with mans Soul it becomes, by  
that lively & growing mixture,  
of

of one nature with it. So that  
minds thus qualified are never  
intangled with misty and ob-  
scure errors. Whereby the  
sense or reason may well be said  
to be the soul or Spirit of God ;  
but I say not of all, but of  
some excellent, and principall  
ones.

The  
COMMENTARY.

*The seventh Chapter contain-  
eth a hidden Philosophy of the ge-  
neration, and matter of the World,  
of the Spirit accompanying it, and  
of the place. The world in God  
he calleth the Continent place,  
wherefore he will not have the  
place of the world to be created,  
but that it is created and not crea-  
ted, created indeed if you respect  
the*

## 54 The second Book of

the workmanship of the Creatures,  
and not created if you respect the  
truth of the workmanship. For  
the world and the spirit, to wit the  
world and a certain divine power  
passing, and disfusing it self  
through all things, were not in the  
world when they were not created,  
but he saith they were in that from  
whence they were to be created;  
but in what were they, but in that  
divine word by which all things  
were made? But in which and  
what was made was life, and  
from whence at length everything  
came that was made. The world  
to be as fruitfull in evil as good,  
being as capable of evil as good,  
as the Earth is fruitfull both of  
medicinable Herbs and hurtfull  
Weeds, and that the earth hath by  
a kind of propriety, so likewise  
the World notwithstanding God  
(as much as with reason he  
might) hath provided for men rea-  
son

Hermes Trismegistus. 35

for discipline, and understanding, against this kind of materiall propriety, least sinne should overranne the World, as brambles and hurtfull weeds, a neglected and untilld desert or wildernesse. Moreover of the spirits diffused through all things, and those things that be under us, of sense or reason, which is a distilling of divine graces into mens souls, as of the Sun beames on the eyes, he discourseth somewhat in this seventh part.

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CHAP. VIII.

**A**sclep. Whom affirm you, O Trismegistus, to be the heads and beginnings of the first Principles.

**Trism.** I reveal & disclose unto thee great & divine Mysteries of  
C 5 which

56 The second Book of

which I now begin by the desired help and assistance of God. There are divers kinds of Gods, and of those one part intelligible, another sensible. They are called intelligibles, not because they may be supposed not to be subject to our senses, (for we perceive them more then those which we call visibles) as our discourse shall shew, and thou if thou mark it maiest perceive: for divine reason passing beyond the reach and capacity of men, if thou with good care, and great attention listen not unto the speakers, will fly away and passe through thee, and returne to the Fountain of it own waters. There are therefore chief Lords or Gods of all Species, the Prince of whom is *Uia*; these are like one to another in their Originall, who by nature effect all things, every  
one



one illuminating one anothers  
work. The chief Lord of Hea-  
ven or whatsoever is concluded  
under that name, is **Jupiter**,  
for from Heaven **Jupiter** gives  
life to all. The chiefe Lord of  
the Sun, is the Light. For the  
benefit of light is distributed un-  
to us by the globe of the Sun.  
There are 34. Lords of the ho-  
roscope, or which speculate in-  
to the Hours of Nativity, placed  
alwayes amongst the fixed Pla-  
nets, the Prince of these they  
call *Παρθένος*, that is, which  
hath all shapes or which, in dif-  
ferent **Species**, makes divers  
Shapes. The seven wander-  
ing Planets have also their  
Lords which they call, Fortune  
and Fate by which all things are  
changed which, were firmly sta-  
blished by the law of nature, & al-  
tered by a continual motion. But  
the Aite is the Organ or instru-  
ment

58 The second Book of  
ment of all things, in which all  
things are brought to passe, and  
the chief Lord or Prince of this is  
second in degree conferring  
mortall things, and the like, up-  
on mortall Creatures. These  
things therefore being so, that  
these lower things are moved by  
the higher; So likewise all  
naturall things are joynd to  
themselves, as mortall things  
with mortall, and insensible  
things with sensible. But the  
chief matter of Government,  
belongs to that great Lord, being  
not many but only one for from  
that one all things descend: rather  
flowing from him when they  
seem to be distant, & are suppo-  
sed to be a many things apart by  
themselves but indeed are uni-  
ted: being one or rather two  
from whom all things are ef-  
fected, and from which they are  
created, that is, the matter of  
which they are made, & from his  
will,

*Hermes Trismegistus.* 59

will by which other things are brought to passe.

**Asclep.** Again, what is the reason of this, O **Trismegistus**?

**Trism.** This, O **Asclepius**. For God the Father, or the Lord of all things, and whatsoever name he is more religiously and devoutly called of men, which ought for our understanding sake to be revered of us, in contemplation of so great a Majesty, we have expressly called him by none of those names, for if this sound uttered, setteth forth the whole will of man or that understanding he shall conceive by the spirit; the substance of which name consisting of a few syllables, is limited and circumscribed, that there might be in man a necessary and familiar intercourse betwixt the voice, & the eares, the spirit and the understanding, and so of all things by these: Whether then:

60 The second Book of

then the name of God be compleate or wholly in these? for I suppose not, that the efficient cause of all Majesty, and the Father and Lord of all things, can be expressed by one name though compounded of many Syllables: it is necessary therefore that he should be called not by one name but rather by all names, (seeing that he is both one and all things) being meet that all things should be his name; or that He should be styled by the name of All. This therefore being but one, as being all, is full of the fruitfulnessse of both natures, and rich in his own will bringeth forth whatsoever he hath a desire to create. His will is all goodnes, and this same goodnes pertaines to all things, from his divinity nature proceeds that all things may be as they are,

*Hermes Trismegistus.* 61

are, and have been and in all things which shall be, nature hence forward may of it self be sufficient to beget. Let this therefore be the reason given thee, O *Asclepius*, wherefore and how all things, of both sexes are made.

*Asclep.* You mean God, *Trismegistus*?

*Trism.* Not only God, O *Asclepius*, but all Creatures having life, and all Creatures without life; for it is impossible that any of those things which are, should be unfruitfull, for fruitfulness being barred from all things that are, it will be impossible that there be a perpetuity of those things which are; for, I say, that Nature and Reason, and the World do contain in them this nature, and preserve in themselves all things created; for every Sex is full of

of procreation, and the Conjunction or uniting of both is incomprehensible, which you may call Venerie or lust or both: this therefore being well understood and clearly conceived, that from the God of nature the invention and office of procreation is for ever, in whom is naturally perfect charity, joy, mirth, and divine love; and it might be said how great the force and necessity of his ministry is but that by the contemplation of him, it is manifest to every ones understanding. For if you observe the first time wherein we are fashioned, how both natures frameth an offspring either Male, or Female, how that the one greedily snatcheth the seed of the other, & shuts it up close within the womb, and lastly how by that common Conjunction at the same time they

they beget men and women, which the woman for a certain time beareth in her womb. The effects therefore of so pleasing, and necessary a work, is committed in the dark, lest that by the derisions and mockings of common ignorant fooles, the divinity of nature by the conjunction of both sexes, should be compelled to blush, if it should be subject to the open view of irreligious and ungodly persons, for there are very few in the world that may be counted modest and religious, whereby it hapeneth that in many there remaines malice and lewdnesse, through the want of wisdom and knowledge in those things which are: for by the understanding of divine knowledge, and religion, by which all things are sweetly disposed, and ordered, there  
is

## 64 The second Book of

is not only a contempt of,  
but also medicine for all  
the evils in the world: but so  
long as ignorance and want of  
knowledge abide, there all man-  
ner of sin gets head, and wounds  
the soul with incurable Vices,  
which being infected, and defiled  
with them, swells it, as it  
were with Poyson, which can-  
not be cured but by a soul fur-  
nished with divine graces and  
understanding. If therefore  
only to a few this shall be pro-  
fitable, it is meet to prosecute  
and conclude this tractate, to  
wit, wherefore God hath  
vouchsafed to impart, only un-  
to men understanding and disci-  
pline. Hear therefore, when  
God the Father, and Lord of  
all things, had after other in-  
feriour Gods or Angels made  
man of the corrupter part of  
the world, and of a like measure  
of



of divinity, it happened that  
fin did remain mixed with those  
bodies, with a necessary desire  
after food and living, (which  
nature hath given in common  
to other living creatures) as also  
other affections and vices of the  
minde incident to mans cor-  
ruption. But the Angels  
which were made of the purest  
part of nature, and wanting  
no helps of Reason and Know-  
ledge, and in a continuall state  
of immortality yet for unity of  
order, and for discipline, and  
understanding he hath ordained  
by an eternal Law, (being an or-  
der by the Law of necessity limi-  
ted) that they should not be far  
from them, or much different in  
nature, appointing man above all  
creatures to be only endued with  
reason and knowledge by which  
he might shun the corruption &  
vices of his body, hath assigned  
them

## 66 The second Book of

them for the purpose and hope of immortality, finally he hath made man that he might be immortall of a divine and mortall nature, that it might appear that man being thus made after the will of God, is in better state then the Angels, who are made only of an immortall nature, as also all other mortall creatures. In which respect, man comming nearest to the nature of God he should worship him in pure and undefiled religion with an honest heart, and that the Angels with a pious and loving affection should pity and preserve all humane things. But this is spoken of some few men who are indued with chaste and pure affections; we have nothing to do with the Vicious, lest this holy discourse be defiled by the thought of them.

The

The  
COMMENTARY.

This eighth Chapter treateth of the materiall Lords or Princes, which he calleth Gods: The Lord of Heaven he calleth Jupiter; the Lord of the Sun, the Light: he reckons 34 Horoscopes, or markers of the hours of childrens nativity in the same place of the fixed Planets, and the chief of these he calleth Pantomorphos, and the Lords of the seven wandering Spheres, or Planets, he maketh Fortune, and Fate: also he appointeth a Lord of the air: but these seem to be the fictions of Devils, and certain varieties smelling of the errors of the Gentiles, and which cause those which trust in them, rather to perish, than to be in any safety. From hence he returneth to the contemplation of the most high and ineffable

# 68 The second Book of

fable God, or which is to be named by all names, being full of fruitfulness, whereby all things have that which makes them altogether fruitfull: From hence is that love of procreation, and that great work of Nature, which hath nothing deformed or unseemly in it, whiles that the thoughts, speech, and actions be modest and religious; for that is given and permitted for the imitation of divine fruitfulness. But because the greatest part of men is ignorant of these mysteries, they profane these divine Laws, and after the manner of brut beasts, irreverently, unseemly, and outrageously use these things; therefore we dare not speak of such things, even for modesties sake, because those inordinate and irreverent thoughts and gestures are apt to thrust themselves into the minds of men, and not that seemly, holy, and undefiled

Hermes Trismegistus. 69

defiled Ordinance of God: and because few have pure and good affections, I suppose that we should neither think, or speak much of this matter. Then he addeth, that God hath bestowed onely upon men reason and understanding, whereby that immortall, and divine part of him might shun vices, which otherwise, by the admixture of his earthly substance, he might easily run into: for by reason of this body and dissoluble part, men must needs fall into lusts, and other temptations of the mind. This, of the eighth Part.

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CHAP. IX.

AND because we are now speaking of the similitude, and mutuall fellowship of men and God, acknowledge, O  
Asclepius,

70 The second Book of  
**Asclepius**, the authority and  
power of man. For as the Lord  
and Father, or most high God,  
is the Creatour of the heavenly  
Gods or Angels; so Man is the  
creatour of those gods which are  
set in Temples, contented to be  
neighbours unto men, and are  
not onely illuminated, but do  
also illuminate, doing not onely  
good unto men, but also con-  
firmeth that there is a God.  
Dost wonder at this, O **Ascle-  
pius**, or dost thou doubt of it, as  
many do?

**Asclep.** I am confounded, O  
**Trismegistus**: but giving cre-  
dit to what you say, I judge man  
to be most happy, who hath at-  
tained to so great blessednesse.

**Trism.** Neither unworthily  
is he worthy of admiration, who  
is the greatest amongst the gods.  
For the **Genus** of all things is  
manifest without confusion, be-  
ing

propagated of the purest part  
of Nature, and the similitudes  
of them to be (as it were) the  
heads of all; but the **Species**  
of the gods, which man repre-  
sents, is fashioned of two na-  
tures; Divine, which is the  
more excellent and noble part;  
and Earthly, which is that which  
is here conversant in earth, and  
which consists of the whole Fa-  
mily, or severall parts of the  
outward Man. So Man being  
mindfull of his Divine Nature  
and Originall, remains still in  
the likenesse of God. For as the  
Father and the Lord hath made  
eternal Gods, that might be like  
unto him. So man hath fashi-  
oned out unto himself gods, af-  
ter the similitude of his own  
countenance.

**Asclep.** Do you mean ima-  
ges, O **Trismegistus**?

**Trism.** Do you not see how

D

far

72 The second Book of  
far you are mistaken > living  
images, full of sencie and spirit  
doing such and so great things  
~~Images~~ having fore-knowledge  
of things to come, and fore-tel-  
ling by many other things, infir-  
mities, cares, and sorrows, which  
shall happen deservedly to men.  
Are you ignorant, O Asclepius,  
that *Aegypt* is the image of Hea-  
ven, or, which is more true, a  
translation of descension of all  
things, which are governed and  
exercised in Heaven? And if we  
speak rightly, Our land is the  
Temple of the whole World,  
and yet for that it becometh  
wise men to fore-know all  
things, it behoveth you not to  
be ignorant, that the time will  
come when it may appear, that  
the *Aegyptians* have by a con-  
stant and pious practice in reli-  
gion served God in vain, and all  
their holy worship shall become  
void, and of no effect: For the



Divinity shall return back from  
Earth into Heaven, Egypt shall  
be forsaken, and the Land which  
was the seat of the Divinity, shall  
be destitute of Religion, and  
deprived of the presence of  
the Deity. For when Strangers  
shall possess, and fill up this  
Land and Kingdom, not onely  
there shall be a neglect of Reli-  
gion; but, which is more mise-  
rable, there shall be Laws en-  
acted against Religion, Piety, and  
Divine Worship, with punish-  
ment inflicted upon those that  
attempt to favour it: then this ho-  
ly seat shall be full of Idolatry,  
Idols Temples, and dead mens  
Sepulchres. O Egypt, Egypt,  
there shall remain only a fained  
show of thy Religion, and which  
will seem incredible to posteri-  
ty; and onely letters shall stand  
engraven upon thy pillars, which  
may declare thy pious deeds,

74 The second Book of

and in thee shall inhabit the  
 Scythian, Indian, or some other  
 neer barbarous Nation. For  
 the Divinity shall fly to Hea-  
 ven, the whole Nation forsaken  
 shall die, and so Ægypt shall be  
 forsaken of God and man. I call  
 upon thee, thou most holy Ri-  
 ver, and presage unto thee  
 things which shall come to  
 passe; thy waters and divine  
 streams shall be filled with  
 blood, which shall overflow the  
 banks, and make a violent inun-  
 dation, so that there shall be  
 more dead than living, and he  
 that remains alive, shall onely  
 by his language be known to be  
 an Ægyptian, but by his deed  
 he shall seem a Barbarian. Wee  
 weep you, O Asclepius. Ægypt  
 shall be furnished with far great-  
 er, and worse evils than these  
 she being heretofore a holy and  
 great Favourer of the Deity, and  
 Divine

*Hermes Trismegistus.* 75

Divine Worship and Religion,  
and that worthily upon earth,  
separated alone from other Na-  
tions, became the Mistresse of  
Sanctity and Piety, shall be an  
example of the greatest cruelty,  
and then with grief of heart, the  
world shall not seem to be ad-  
mired and adored. This whole  
good (than the which there nei-  
ther is, hath, or shall be any  
thing that shall appear, of more  
excellencie) shall be indanger-  
ed, and seem burdenous to men,  
and in this respect shall be de-  
spised: neither shall the world  
be esteemed, which is the im-  
mutable work of God, a most  
glorious Fabrick, a work com-  
pounded with the different va-  
riety of shapes, an instrument of  
the will of God, who in his work  
(without envie) bespake all  
things to become one; which,  
of the beholders, might be ho-  
noured,

## 76 The second Book of

noured, praised, and loved, being an united heap of sundry shapes. For darknesse shall be preferred before light, death shall seem sweeter than life, no man shall look up to Heaven, a religious man shall be accounted a mad man, an irreligious and profane person seem wise, a mad man, valiant; and the worst of all men, good and pious: for the Soul, and all things about it, wherein it is either mortall, or conceiveth that it shall attain to immortality, accordingly as I have declared unto you, shall not onely be esteemed a thing worthy of laughter, but also a meer vanity: For beleieve me, it shall be reckoned a capital offence for him that shall study to be religious, there shall new Statutes and Laws be stablished: nothing which is religious shall be heard worthy of Heaven,

ven, or heavenly things, or be  
entertained in the hearts of  
men: there shall be a separation  
of God, which is much to be la-  
mented, from the Society of  
men; onely evil angels shall re-  
main mixed with the humanity,  
which shall violently move to  
all manner of audacious mis-  
chiefs, stir them up to wars, se-  
dition, robberies, deceit, and  
unto all things contrary to the  
disposition of the Soul, then the  
Earth shall not stand, the Sea  
shall not be sailed in; and in  
Heaven, the course of the Stars  
and Planets shall cease, all di-  
vine knowledge shall (of ne-  
cessity) be buried in silence, the  
fruits of the earth shall be cor-  
rupted, neither shall the earth  
be fruitfull, and the air it self  
shall languish with a sorrowfull  
countenance; these and such  
like times shall come; irreligion

78 The second Book of

and confusion of the world, with  
a senselesnes & vacancy of al good  
things. When these things shall  
happen, O **Asclepius**, then that  
**Lord and Father God Almighty,**  
**Governour onely of the world,**  
looking into the manners, and  
voluntary deeds of men; after  
his own will (which is his good-  
nesse) punishing vices, taking  
away all errours and corruption,  
and drowning all manner of  
wickednesse, either by an inun-  
dation of waters, or else consu-  
ming them by fire, or else by  
plague and pestilence, he will  
end this world, and restore it to  
its ancient beauty; so that the  
world it self may seem to be ad-  
mired and honoured: and God,  
the Creatour and Restorer of so  
great a work, shall of all men  
then being, be magnified with  
continuall praises and thanksgi-  
vings: For this generation of the  
world,

*Hermes Trismegistus. 79*

world, and the reformation of  
all good things, and the most  
holy and religious restitution of  
nature it self, in due time both  
is, and hath been eternall from  
the beginning, for the will of  
God wants beginning, which  
is the same, and continuall in  
every place.

**Asclep.** For the nature of  
God is the counsaile of his will,  
and his excellent goodnesse  
his counsaile, O **Trismegist.**  
**m.**

**Trism.** O **Asclepius**, his will  
proceeds from his counsaile, and  
his will from his will, neither  
wills he any thing ambitiously  
which is full of all things, and  
those which he wills he hath,  
but he wills all good things,  
and hath all he wills. For he  
thinks and wills all good things;  
but this is God, and the world is  
the Image of that Good.

80 The second Book of  
**Asclep.** Good O **Trismegistus.**

**Trism.** Good, as I shall teach thee, O **Asclepius**, for as God is the dispenser and giver of all good things, to every **Genus** and **Species** in the World, that is, both of soul and life, so likewise the world is the distributor and giver of all things, which seem good to mortall creatures, that is, change of parts seasonable fruites, nativity, encrease and maturity, and the like, and by this God sitting above in the highest Heaven, is every where, and beholds all things: for there is above these Lower Heavens, a place without Starrs, far from all earthly things, this place betwixt Heaven and Earth the dispenser of all things inhabiteth, whom we call **Jupiter**, or god, but on the earth and the Sea, Reigneth **Jupiter**



*Hermes Trismegistus.* 81.

**Jupiter Pluto**, and he is the nourisher, and preserver of all living and fruitfull mortall Creatures, by the power of all these, Fruits, Trees, Plants, and the ground are refreshed, and the power and effects of other Gods are distributed through all things that are. They are distributed that shall bear rule on the Earth, and shall be placed in the very entrance of **Egypt**, in that City which is built in the West, or where the Sun sets. To which place all mortall Creatures both in Land and Sea shall hasten.

**Asclep.** But at this time where are they, O **Trismegistus**.

**Trism.** They are placed in the great City, in the Libyan Mountain, and thus far this declaration.

The

## 82 The second Book of

The  
COMMENTARY.

This whole Ninth Chapter is  
prophane. Which Augustine well  
reproveth in his Book of the City of  
God. It maintaines Idolatry,  
extolling and setting it forth with  
wonderfull praises, and the decay  
or fall of it, it much deplores. In  
the highest Heaven, he setteth a  
certain God beholding all things;  
but, in that place betwixt Heaven  
and Earth, he placeth Jupiter,  
the disposer, or Steward; and  
Pluto Jupiter so be the God, and  
dispenser on Land, and Sea, as  
though there were one God in Hea-  
ven, another in the Aire, and ano-  
ther on the Land, and Sea; all  
which contein an infinite impiety  
of errors: for out of divine Writ  
we are uncorruptly, purely, and  
holily taught, that the Lord he is  
God

Hermes Trismegistus. 83

God in Heaven above, and in Earth below, and that there is no other God: but against Idols and Idolatry the word of God and the holy Prophets do warily admonish us, that we be not defiled, with so great a blot of impiety, nor corrupted with so great an error, for the Idol it self is cursed, and him that made it, and again, the worshipping of cursed Idols is the cause beginning, and end of all mischief. An Idol maker, and this Idol are both an abomination to the Lord, for both that which is made, with him that it shall be consumed with fire, these and many more things of Idolatry out of the Book of wisdom, and in Leviticus God himself out of his own mouth commandeth, I am the Lord your God, you shall not make to your self any Idol, or graven Image, neither shall you erect any monument, or Pillar in your Land to worship

## 84 The second Book of

worship it. And of the Idols of Egypt, he advertiseth in Ezekiel, Be not polluted with the Idols of Egypt, for I am the Lord your God: and of their abolishing he speaketh by the same Prophet, I will destroy their Images and make an end of their Idol Memphis, he shall no more lead them out of the Land of Egypt. What Mercurius calleth the soul Spirit, and sense of Idols, and Images in that they shall bring diseases, in firmities, and fears upon men, we know without doubt to be evil Spirits, and in assurance to be those of which the Prophet truly affirmeth, that all the Gods of the gentiles, are devils, or evil Spirits. Let this little be sufficient against the impiety of Trismegistus in this ninth part, for we speake to those who are seasoned with the true knowledge of God, which (as the wiseman saith) to know and understand

Hermes Trismegistus. 84

stand is perfect righteousness, and to know his righteousness and power is the root of immortality, Lazareus draweth this place to an Analogie, as though the Idols were the Apostles; the Image of man, Christ; the power given from above, the holy Ghost; Ægypt, the darkness of the gentiles; and the persecution of the Disciples Apostles & Martyrs, the graven pillars declaring their pious works, and that the heart of posterity did receive not their works, but their faith only: these are piously invented, but peradventure far from the Letter, & meaning. I think with Augustine that Hermes overshot himself both in this and the 13. Chapter, for they seem to have the Prophets of the Gentiles, as Balaam and the Sybills, that they may suffer both Light and darkness the lucid and obscure intermixture of Prophecies sometimes pure.

86 The second Book of  
*pure, and sometimes impure.*  
*This, for the ninth Chapter.*

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CHAP. X.

**N**OW we are to discourse of  
mortality&immortality:for  
hope and fear of death torments  
many, which are ignorant of the  
true reason:for death is caused by  
dissolution of the body, tyred  
out with labour and the har-  
mony being ended whereby  
the members of the body are  
fitted into one composition for  
lively uses, for the body dieth  
when the vitall parts of man  
faile. This is therefore death,  
a dissolution of the body, and  
an utter decay of the bodily  
senses, about which to take  
thought for, is to no purpose;  
but

but there is an other thing necessary, which either ignorance, or mans incredulity set-  
teth leight by.

**Asclep.** What is that, O **Trismegistus**, that they are either ignorant of, or believe not to be?

**Trism.** Hear therefore, O **Asclepius**, when there shall be a separation of the soul from the body, then the Judgement, and examination of his deserts shall passe over unto the great God; and he when he shall see that it is just and righteous shall suffer it to abide in a fit Mansion but if he shall see it to be spotted and defiled with sin and iniquity he will cast it down, and deliver it to Stormes, Whirle-Winds, fire, Lightening, and Tempest; and it shall be snatch-  
ed up betwixt Heaven and Earth, with worldly tempests,  
and

## 88 The second Book of

and with continuall torments;  
be driven into divers places,  
that in this respect the eternity  
of them is prejudicious because  
by an immortall sentence, the  
Soul is condemned to everlasting  
judgment; lest therefore we  
be infolded with these miseries,  
know that we must fear tremble,  
and beware; for the unbelievers  
are after their faults and pleasure  
in sin compelled to believe  
not by words, but by examples,  
not by threatenings  
but by the very suffering of punishment.

**Asclep.** Are not then, O **Sit-  
megistus**, the faults of men punished  
only by mans Law.

**Crism.** Forsooth, O **Ascle-  
pius**, first all earthly things  
which are mortall, then those  
things also which live by corporal  
reason and which swarve from  
living after that Law of reason,  
all



*Hermes Trismegistus.* 89

all these according to their deserts and faults are liable to punishment, but after death so much the sorer punishment as their faults have been concealed & unpunished in this life, for God foreknowing all things renders a like punishment to every one according to the measure and quality of the fault.

**Asclep.** Who are worthy of the greatest punishment, O **Trismegistus.**

**Trism.** Those who being condemned by the Laws of men come to a violent death, which seem not to yeeld unto the debt of nature, but to suffer punishment for their deserts: Contrarywise, God is a sheild and defence unto a righteous man, who loveth piety and religion; for he defendeth such from all manner of dangers and evils,

90 The second Book of

evils, for the Father and Lord of all things, who alone is all, shewes himself willingly to all, not where he is in place, nor what in quality, nor how great in quantity, but illuminating man with the alone understanding of the mind, who when the darknesse of mind is removed; and the brightnesse of truth perceived, participates himself by the full sense of divine knowledge, by whose love he is freed from that naturall part which is mortall, and conceiyeth hope of future immortality. This therefore shall be the difference betwixt good and evil men, for every one by piety religion divine worship and reverence of God, shineth and becometh bright as the eye-sight, when he hath thoroughly seen the truth of reason, and the confidence of hope and excelleth so far other men

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*Hermes Trismegistus.* 91

men, as the Sun excelleth other  
Starrs in his Light : for the  
Sun it self not so much in great-  
nesse of diety, as in divinity  
and sanctity illuminateth the  
other Starrs. For I suppose this,  
O *Asclepius*, to be the Second  
God governing all other things,  
& illustrating all worldly things  
whether they be creatures with  
life or without life, for if the crea-  
ture the world hath, is & shall al-  
waies be Living, nothing in the  
world is mortal. For there is no  
place of mortality, for every liv-  
ing part which is in the world,  
as in one and the same continu-  
all living creature, wherefore  
it ought to be full of life and  
eternity, if it must always live.  
The Sun therefore as the world  
is eternall, and so is the gover-  
nour of life and liveliness, and  
the continual dispenser of them.  
He is therefore the God of the  
living

## 92 The second Book of

living and of those things which have life in the world, the continuall governour, and eternall dispensator of life it self, for he hath once dispensed by an eternall Law, and giveth life to every Living thing. In this manner which I will speake of, for in that quicknesse of eternity, the world is moved, and in that living eternity, is the place of the world, for which hereafter it shall neither stand nor be destroyed, the world being intrenched, and as it were wrapped in with the eternity of life. It is therefore the dispenser or giver of life to all things which are in it, and the place of all things which are governed under the Sun, the commotion of which world consisteth of a twofold effect. For it self is outwardly enlivened from eternity, and it quick-

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*Hermes Trismegistus.* 93

ens and inlivens those things which are within it, differing in proportions, and appointed, and prefixed times, all things are known and ordered by the effects of the Sun, and by the course, and influence of the Starrs, all temporall things are established by reason and divine Law, the Earthly seasons are known by the quality of the Aire, as either in the variety of heat, or cold, the Heavenly seasons by the return of the Starrs to the same places, and by the temporall change of sides, and the world is the receptacle of time, by whose course and motion it is refreshed, but time is kept by order. Order and time make an innovation of all things which are in the world by course,

The

The  
COMMENTARY.

*This Tenth Chapter, speakeith of death and the examination of the Soul, when the body shall die, that they shall be most punished after death, whose life justly is taken away by mens Lawes, for the greatnesse of their offences, that God is a defence to the righteous; of the divinity of the Sun, and the world, for he puts the World to be the first sensible God, the Sun to be the Second, that the world shall never take rest, nor be destroyed. But we give not the incommunicable name of God, neither to the Sun, nor to the world, and believe that the world shall one day be dissolved. These things therefore being understood (as the bare words of Hermes shew,) they set out the error of the Gentiles, yet we*

we do grant by participation to  
these a divinity, as to excellent  
works of God. This the tenth part.

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CHAP. XI.

**V** Herefore all things be-  
ing to, neither of  
things created, Heavenly things  
or Earthly, is any thing stable  
fixed or immoveable, for only  
God, and worthily he alone is  
in himself from himself, and on  
all sides wholly full and perfect,  
and this is his firme stability  
which cannot be removed by the  
enforcement, or occasion of  
any other seeing in him are all  
things, and in all things he is  
only, unlesse any man will dare  
to say that his motion consisteth  
in eternity, but much rather his e-  
ternity is unmoveable, into which  
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God is a defence to the righteousness  
of the divinity of the Sun, and the  
world, for he puts the World to be  
the first sensible God, the Sun to  
be the Second, that the world shall  
never take rest, nor be destroyed.  
But we give not the incommunica-  
ble name of God, neither to the  
Sun, nor to the world, and be-  
lieve that the world shall one day be  
dissolved. These things therefore  
being understood (as the bare  
words of Hermes shew,) they set  
out the error of the Gentiles, yet  
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fixed or immoveable, for only  
 God, and worthily he alone is  
 in himself from himself, and on  
 all sides wholly full and perfect,  
 and this is his firme stability  
 which cannot be removed by the  
 enforcement, or occasion of  
 any other seeing in him are all  
 things, and in all things he is  
 only, unlesse any man will dare  
 to say that his motion consisteth  
 in eternity, but much rather his e-  
 ternity is unmoveable, into which  
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96 The second Book of  
the motion of all times return-  
eth, and from which the mo-  
tion of all times takes it begin-  
ning. God hath therefore been  
alwayes stable, and his eterni-  
ty alwaies alike stable with him,  
containing the world not crea-  
ted within himself, which we  
rightly call sensible. The  
Image of this God is the world,  
which is made an imitator or  
resemblance of eternity: for  
time hath the force, and nature  
of stability in the very necessity  
of return again into it self:  
wherefore albeit eternity be  
stable immoveable and fixed,  
yet because by the mobility of  
time, motion is alwayes called  
back into eternity, and that  
mobility is turned by reason of  
time, it comes to passe that  
eternity it self is certainly im-  
moveable, and may seem only  
by time to be moved in which it  
self

Self is, for in that time is all the motion; so it happens that the stability of eternity is moved, and the stability of time, becomes stable by the rule of motion, and so it is credible that God is moved into himself, by the same immoveableness, for there is an in immoveable motion in the greatnesse of his very stability, for the condition of his greatnesse is immoveable. This therefore which is so, and not obvious to our senses, is infinite, incomprehensible and inestimable, which can neither be sustained, reported of, nor found out; whereupon it is uncertain wherein, where, how, and in what fashion it is: for he is reported to be in the greatest stability, and in him is his stability, whether he be God or Eternity, whether the one be in the other, or both

98 The second Book of  
in either, for which cause eter-  
nity is without definition of  
time: but time which may  
be defined, returning either by  
order course or circuit of another  
is eternal, wherefore both seem  
to be infinite, both eternall, for  
stability considering that it is  
fixed, for that by the Benefit of  
strength it can sustein all  
things that are moveable, it  
worthily obtaineth Dominion  
for the beginning of all things  
which are, is God, and eternity;  
but the world because it is mo-  
veable hath not the principali-  
ty, for his mobility prevents his  
stability by the rule of continu-  
all motion, having an immove-  
able strength. All sense there-  
fore of the divinity being alike  
and immoveable, moveth it  
self by his stability, and is incor-  
rupt, and eternal, or what soever  
may more fitly be called; eter-  
nity

*Hermes Trismegistus.* 99

ity consisting in the very truth  
of the high God, full of all sen-  
sible things, and full knowledge  
abiding as I said with God, but  
worldly sense is the receptacle  
of all sensible things, both for  
~~Species~~ and discipline, but hu-  
mane sense by the strength of  
memory, for that it remembers  
all things that it hath done: for  
divine reason and sense come  
down continually to man,  
and God would not that excel-  
lent, and divine sense should be  
confounded with all Creatures,  
lest it should blush in being  
mixt with brutes. For the un-  
derstanding of humane sense, of  
what sort, and how great it is,  
is wholly in the memory of  
things past: for by that strength  
of memory it is made govern-  
our of the earth; but the un-  
derstanding of Nature, and of  
the quality and sense of the  
world,

100 The second Book of

world, may be perceived by all  
 sensible things in the world  
 eternity, which is the second  
 is known to be a sense and qua-  
 lity given of the sensible world,  
 but the understanding of the  
 quality, and quality of the sense  
 of the high God, is the alone  
 truth, the shadow of which  
 truth in the world is not cer-  
 tainly known in the last line,  
 for where is any thing known by  
 the dimension of time, where  
 there seem to be leafings gene-  
 rations and errors? You see  
 therefore, O **Asclepius**, in  
 what things we are agreed up-  
 on, which we handle or which  
 we dare to touch: but I give  
 unto thee thanks, O great God,  
 which hast illuminated me with  
 the light of seeing thy divinity:  
 and you O **Latus**, **Asclepius**,  
 And **Amnon**, conceale secret-  
 ly within your breasts and keep  
 close

*Hermes Trismegistus.* 101

close these divine Mysteries. But in this differeth understanding from sense, for that our understanding commeth by the intention, and diligence of the mind to understand and know the quality of the sense of the world, but the understanding of the world reacheth to eternity, and to know God who is above it self, and so it happens unto us men, that as in a mist we see those things which are in Heaven, as much as it is possible through the condition of humane sense. And this intention or reach in perceiving so great good things is very narrow and weak, but is most large when it shall see it by knowledge, and the testimony of a good conscience.

The  
COMMENTARY.

The eleventh Chapter discovereth that onely God is immovable and stable, and all other things mutable; God is infinite, incomprehensible, and is unknown what he is: the holy, incorrupt, and eternall sense of God, treateth of the sense of the world, of the sense of man, of the difference of the understanding from the sense. This is the Sum of the eleventh Part.

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## CHAP. XII.

**B**ut of Vacuity, which also with many seems to be a great matter, I thus think, that a Vacuity neither is, can, or shall be any thing; for all things  
of



*Hermes Trismegistus.* 103

of the world are most full parts,  
as the world it self is full of bo-  
dies different in quality and  
form, having both their form  
and greatnesse, of which one is  
greater than another, and one  
lesse than another, different in  
strength and weaknesse: for  
some of these easily seem to be  
the stronger, as the greater: but  
the lesser and smaller can scarce-  
ly, or not at all be seen, which  
things to be, we know onely by  
feeling, whereby it happeneth,  
that many beleeeve that these are  
not bodies, or substances, but em-  
pty places, which is impossible;  
for if any thing be named out of  
the world, if there be any thing  
(which I hardly beleeeve) therein  
so full of intelligible things, that  
is, things like to the Divinity, as  
this place which is called the  
sensible world, is full of bodies  
and creatures, agreeing both in

104 The second Book of  
nature and quality to it, all  
whose representations we see  
not; but some exceedingly  
great, some exceeding little,  
and short, which either through  
the length of distance, or that  
we are dull of eye-sight, they ap-  
pear to be such unto us, or to be  
short, for their exceeding smal-  
nesse they are supposed of some  
not to be. I speak now of An-  
gels, which, I suppose, sojourn  
with us, and Spirits above us,  
which are betwixt the purest  
part of the air, and the earth,  
where there is neither place for  
Clouds, nor commotion by the  
motion of any Mercur, Comet,  
or Signe. In this respect, O *A-*  
*sclepius*, thou canst say nothing  
to be subject to Vacuity, unless  
thou vauntest there may be a  
Vacuity of what thou affirmest  
to be empty, as a Vacuity from  
the fire, from the water, and  
from

from the like, which although it happens to seem so (For that may be void of such things, which are great, or little, which makes it seem empty) yet there cannot be a Vacuity of Spirit, and Air. The like also we may speak of a place, for the word onely wants understanding; for a place appeareth what it is, from that of which it is: for when the principall name is taken away, the signification, or interpretation is imperfect. Wherefore the place of water, the place of fire, or such like, we truly say; for as it is impossible for any thing to be void, or empty, so the place alone what it is cannot be known. For if you put the place without that of which it is, it shall seem to be an empty place, which I beleeve the world hath not: For if there be no Vacuity, neither a  
place

106 The second Book of  
place appeareth what it is by  
it self; unlesse you shall adde  
unto it, either longitudes, lati-  
tudes, or altitudes, as signes to  
the bodies of men. These things  
being so, **Asclepius**, and you  
that are present know, that the  
intelligible World that is God  
who is known only by the sight  
of the soul, is incorporeal; nei-  
ther can any thing corporall be  
mixed with his Nature, that is  
which may be known by qua-  
lity, quantity, and numbers  
for no such thing abideth in  
him; therefore this world  
which is called sensible, is the  
receptacle of all sensible sope-  
rles, quantities, or bodies; all  
which without God, cannot re-  
ceive. Vegetation, and be re-  
freshed; for all things are God  
and from him and his will are  
all things: that which is wholly  
good, comely and wise, sensible  
and

and intelligible, belongs to him alone, and without this there neither is, hath, or shall be any thing; for all things are from him, in him, and by him, both qualities of many shapes, and great quantities, and greatnesse exceeding measure and varieties of **Species** and **Forms**, which if you shall understand, O **Asclepius**, you will give God thanks, and if you shall wel observe the whole, you shall by true reason perfectly learn, that the world it self is sensible, and all things that are in it, to be covered (as with a garment) from that upper world: for every kinde of creature. O **Asclepius**, of what kind soever, as well mortal, immortal, or rational, whether it be a living creature, or be not, each of them retain the image and form of their kinde, and albeit every kind of creature possesseth

108 The second Book of  
settleth the full form of his kind;  
yet in the same form of shews,  
they are all unlike one to ano-  
ther, as the **Genus** of men, al-  
though it be uniform, that a  
man may naturally be known,  
yet all of them are in the same  
form unlike to themselves; for  
the **Species**, which is divine, is  
incorporeal, and whatsoever  
else is comprehended in the  
soul, or mind: seeing therefore  
these two, of which the Form  
consisteth, are corporeal, and in-  
corporeal, it is impossible that  
every Form should be created,  
or born like one to another, the  
moments of hours and climates  
differing, and being distant, but  
are changed so often, as an hour  
hath minutes, in which is that  
God of all shapes, we have spo-  
ken of; therefore the **Species**, or  
Form, remaineth, begetting so  
often from it self, so many, and  
so

*Hermes Trismegistus. 109*

so different shapes, as the course of the world hath moments, which world is turned by conversion and changes, but the **Species** is neither turned, nor changed. So the Forms of each kind are permanent and stable, but unlike to themselves in the same Form.

**Asclep.** And the world changeth his **Species**, or Form, O **Trismegistus**.

**Trism.** Do you perceive therefore, O **Asclepius**, that all things are spoken unto thee, as to one in a sleep, or in a dream? For what is the world, or of what consisteth it, but of all things created?

**Asclep.** Therefore you mean to speak of the Heaven, and of the Earth, & of the Elements, **Trismegistus**? For other things are more frequently changed into Forms, the Heaven moystening,  
or

110 The second Book of

or drying up, cooling or heating, bright or lowring. In one Form of the Heaven, these things are, which Forms are altered by the Form, also the Earth hath alwayes many alterations of her Form; as when it bringeth forth fruits, and when it nourisheth her fruits, and when it giveth sundry and divers qualities, and quantities of all fruits, and places, and times, for the qualities, sents, relishes, and forms of all trees, flowers, and berries. The fire also hath many and divine alterations; for the Forms of the Sun and the Moon, they are of all shapes; for they are (as it were) our looking-glasses for representation. But of these things enough.

The



The  
COMMENTARY.

This twelfth Chapter declareth, that there is no Vacuity, or Emptiness in things; that Angels are conversant, and dwell with us, who, in regard of their too much subtilty, are not perceived of us; that Spirits possesse the purer part of the Air; the alone name of a place to be void, that it belongs to somewhat, which being not understood, it cannot be conceived what a place is, and that is common to all Relatives. He affirmeth an intelligible World, with which the sensible World, and all things in it, are veiled as with a garment seeing who is contained in the intelligible World, that the Forms of all kinds whatsoever, that are of one shape, are unlike, and that according to the circles, moments, and minutes  
of

112 The second Book of  
of hours, of which he maketh Pan-  
tomorphos Lord, whom before he  
affirmed to be God of the Horo-  
scopes: but we acknowledge no such  
God: but leave it to the folly and  
ignorance of the Gentiles: if any  
as yet be so apparently blind, mad,  
and stupified; but we, according  
to the saying of St. Paul, have but  
one God, the Father, in whom are  
all things, and we in him; and one  
Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are  
all things, and we by him. The Spe-  
cies and Forms, that is, the Idea's  
of which there is so much dispute  
with Plato and the Platonicks,  
the immutable and unchangeable  
Forms he placeth in Pantomor-  
phos, having this name, as though  
he consisted of all shapes, and of  
every Idea, from which severall  
hours and moments, every particu-  
lar Form is diversly shaped; but  
that the rest are mutable, as the  
World, the Heaven, and the Earth,  
but

but there are who account Mercurius his *Pantamorphos*, and Plato his *Idea* to be meer forged things and fictions. This is the summe of the twelfth Chapter.

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CHAP. XIII.

**L**Et us return again to man, and to reason, by which divine gift, man is called a reasonable creature, for those things are lesse to be wondered at, (albeit they deserve admiration) which are only spoken of man. But of all wonders this is the greatest wonder, that man could find out and supply the divine nature: because therefore, our forefathers erred much, being incredulous about the reason and nature of the Gods,  
and

114 The second Book of  
and not looking into divine  
worship, and religion, they  
found out an art whereby they  
might make them gods; to  
which invention they joyned  
the work of nature, and because  
they could not make souls, they  
called out the souls of Devils or  
Spirits, and put them into their  
Idols, and divine Myſteries, by  
which alone the Idols had power  
to do either good or hurt.  
For thy Grandfather, O Aſclepi-  
us, was the first inventer of  
Phyſick, to whom a Temple is  
conſecrated in a mountain of  
Libya, or Africa, near unto the  
ſhoare of Crocodiles, in which  
lieth his body; the reſt of him,  
or rather the whole of him be-  
ing his better and Spirituall  
part, is gone back again to Hea-  
ven, affording all manner of  
help and cure to diſeaſed and  
ſick perſons, now by vertue of  
his

his diety, as he was wont to give  
before by art or skill of Physick,  
and **Hermes** which was the  
name of my Aunceltors, doth  
not he now in his Country re-  
maining that surname, cure all  
persons that come from all parts  
to him? Also Isis the wife of  
Osiris being well pleased how  
much good she hath done? and  
displeased, how much evil do we  
know? for it is an easy matter  
for earthly gods to be displeased,  
seeing that they are made of the  
same nature that man is, where-  
upon it happened that these ho-  
ly creatures were called upon,  
and their soules worshipped  
throughout every City, by the  
Egyptians who living consecra-  
ted them so that they continued  
in their Lawes, and were called  
by their names: for this cause  
O **Asclepius**, those which seem  
to some worthy to be worship-  
ped

116 The second Book of  
ed and honoured to others seem  
otherwise, therefore Egyptian  
Cities are wont to fall out, and  
warr one with another.

**Asclep.** And what is the  
quality or substance O **Erismegistus** of these earthly Gods?

**Erism.** It consisteth, O **Asclepius**, of herbs, of Stones, of Spices which have in them a natural power of divinity, and for this cause they are delighted with often sacrifices, Hymns, praises, and most sweet musick resembling an Heavenly harmony, that that which is Heavenly may by a Heavenly and frequent use be allured into the Idol, and there stay a long time, as glad and desirous of humane society: so man is the feigner of the gods, and you should not suppose the effects of these earthly gods to be casual, O **Asclepius**, the Heavenly Gods  
inhabite

*Hermes Trismegistus. 117*

inhabite the highest heavenly places fulfilling and preserving that order which he hath received. But these our Gods, regarding peculiarly certain things, and foretelling some things by lot and conjecture, foretelling many things and after a manner helping them, become as it were by a friendly alliance aiders unto mens affairs.

The  
COMMENTARY.

*This Thirteenth Chapter is full of impiety like unto the ninth, wherein Mercurius will have a man to be most divine, and most to be admired; he is certainly most impious, and profane, to wit that he shall be the inventor of Idolatry, that he should thrust in devilish Spirits called up into Idols,*

## 118 The second Book of

Idols, and adde Rites, and sacrifices concerning Æsculapius Mercurius, Isis, Osiris, which were worshipped of the Egyptians; and of those plants and creatures which in Ægypt were esteemed holy, and had in reverence of herbs, and Stones, musick and hymns, with which they did appease & reconcile those Spirits which were put into their Idols and Images, which still some Pythonists are accustomed to do at this day (O naughty age) who think that they have Spirits closed up either in rings or boxes: a most impious sort of men, hatefull to God and man; a very profest enemy: and against this profane error of impiety, St. Augustine well inveigheth in his book of the City of God. This for the 13. Chapter.

CHAP.



CHAP. XIV.

**A**sclep. What part therefore of the world do the fates abide in, O *Trismegistus*? If the Heavenly Gods beare universal rule, do the earthly Gods which we call Fortune and Fate inhabite in particular places?

*Trism.* O *Asclepius*, that is the necessity of all things that are governed, that they are alwayes joyned and lincked together: this is therefore the efficient cause of things, of the most high God, or next unto God, which second effect is God, or the discipline, of all earthly and Heavenly things, established by divine  
F laws,

120 The second Book of  
lawes. These therefore, Fortune  
and Necessity, are both tyed to-  
gether by an individuall knot.  
The former of which, Fortune  
or Fate, begets the beginning of  
all things, but Necessity entor-  
ceth them to their effects, which  
depends from those beginnings.  
Order, followeth these, which  
is the continuance, and dispositi-  
on of time in bringing things  
to passe, for nothing is with-  
out the agreement of Order. In  
all these this world is perfit, for  
the world it self is carried by  
Order, or consisteth wholly of  
Order: wherefore these 3. Fate  
Necessity, and Order, are brought  
to passe, especially by the will  
of God, who governeth the  
world by his own Law and di-  
vine reason. By these there-  
fore both will and nill are by  
divine hand fully crossed; so  
they are neither moved by an-  
ge

*Hermes Trismegistus.* 121

ger, nor bowed by favour, but  
serve the necessity of eternall  
reason, which Eternity is un-  
changeable, immoveable, and  
insoluble. Fate therefore is  
the first; which, the seed being  
as it were cast in, receives the  
encrease of all future things. Ne-  
cessity follows, by which all  
things are enforced violently to  
their effects. The Third is  
Order, which preserveth the  
frame of those things which  
Fate and Necessity hath disposed  
of. This is therefore eternity,  
which neither hath beginning  
nor ending, which by a fixed  
immutable law of continuall  
motion is preserved. It riseth  
and falls oftentimes by course,  
so that when the times vary, it  
riseth again in those same parts  
in which it fell, for so is reason  
a voluble rotundity that all are  
so firmly joyned that you can-

122 The second Book of  
not know what is the begin-  
ning of volubility, when all  
things seem to go before, and  
follow themselves, for chance  
and fortune are mixed in all  
worldly things.

The  
COMMENTARY.

The fourteenth Chapter speak-  
eth of the Destinies, which he cal-  
leth Fate, Necessity, and Order;  
others, Clotho, Lachesis, and  
Atropos. About which the Eth-  
nicks were not wont lesse to trifle,  
than about other gods, which they  
feigned unto themselves, coining  
new and wonder-working Deities:  
but Mercurius treats of these more  
briefly and sparingly; and (as it  
were) doubtfully, like as these three  
should be the determination, and  
predestination of the Divine Will;  
which Necessity of things, as they  
be,

he, follows; which lastly Order  
 preserves, even as it is stablished  
 by Divine and Eternall Law: So  
 that the first Fate is Divine Pre-  
 destination; the second, Conse-  
 quence of things; and the third,  
 Preservation. And these three, or  
 the Divine Law, or those things  
 that follow the course of Divine  
 Law, comen in the order both of fi-  
 nite causes, and those which are  
 according to nature, but yet Fate  
 admitteth in casuall things inde-  
 finite, and indeterminate causes  
 beyond nature: but of these let  
 others judge. And this for this pre-  
 sent part.

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CHAP. XV.

**W**E have spoken of all  
 things as we could,  
 and as the divinity would suffer

122 The second Book of  
not know what is the begin-  
ning of volubility, when all  
things seem to go before, and  
follow themselves, for chance  
and fortune are mixed in all  
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The  
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predestination of the Divine Will;  
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 others judge. And this for this pre-  
 sent part.

---

CHAP. XV.

**W**E have spoken of all  
 things as we could,  
 and as the divinity would suffer

124 The second Book of  
and permit: It onely remained  
that we praise God and pray  
unto him, and so return to the  
care of the body. For treating  
sufficiently of divine matters,  
we have satisfied our minds as it  
were with the food of the soul.  
But as they passed out of the  
cloyster, when they began to  
pray to God, they looked back  
towards the South; for when the  
Sun setteth, if any man will  
pray to God, he ought to look  
that way; as also when the Sun  
riseth, to look East: Now as they  
were saying their prayers,  
Asclepius said, with a low  
voice. O Lattus, let us put the Fa-  
ther in mind that he command  
that we should dedicate our  
prayers unto God, with an ad-  
dition of frankincense, and in-  
cense. Drismegistus hearing of  
it, and being moved, saith.  
Guests better O Asclepius, for  
this



this is like unto these when you pray unto God to burn frankincense, and the like: for nothing is wanting unto him, who himself is all things, for in him are all things; but let us give thanks, and adore him, for these are the chief sacrifices of God, when thanks are given of mortall men. We give thee thanks, O great and glorious God, for by thy grace only we have attained to the Light of thy knowledge. Thou Name, holy and worthy to be honoured, one name by which God as a Father is devoutly to be praised, because thou vouchsafest to give unto all fatherly piety religion and love, or whatsoever thing else is of most efficacy, when thou dost reward us with sense, reason, and understanding; with sense that we may know thee; with reason, that we may look up un-

## 126 The second Book of

to thee; and search into thy di-  
vine nature; with understanding  
that knowing thee we may re-  
joyce in thee, and being pre-  
served by thy Majesty, we may  
delight our selves in thee, that  
thou wast pleased to shew thy  
self wholly unto us: let us give  
thanks that thou hast vouch-  
safed to consecrate us, who  
are placed in these earthly ta-  
bernacles to be heirs of eterni-  
ty. For this is only mans con-  
gratulation and knowledge of  
thy Majesty. We have known  
thee, thou great Light, by reason  
we have known thee to be the  
most wise and sensible God, O  
true way of Life, O fruitfull  
encrease of all naturall things;  
we have known thee in the full  
conception of thy whole na-  
ture, we have known thee in  
thy eternity, for in all this our  
prayer adoring the bonny of  
thy

thy goodnesse, we only beseech thee, that thou wilt be pleased to continue us in the love of thy knowledge, and that by this kind of life we be never separated from thee: desiring this we be- take us to a pure Supper without flesh.

The  
COMMENTARY.

*This Fifteenth Chapter religi-  
ously endeth the Dialogue with  
giving of thanks. When thank-  
giving and adoration is ended;  
Mercurius, Asclepius Ammon  
and Tatus, the Four men which  
filled the holy place or cloister, ac-  
cording to the religious Rites of the  
Egyptians, beake themselves to  
a pure banquet not consisting of flesh;  
and thus far Hermes, of the will of  
God.*

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